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SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

NEWS

Region 4

COMPRISING STATES OF LOUISIANA, ARKANSAS
AND TEXAS, EXCEPT HIGH PLAINS AREA

REGIONAL OFFICE---FORT WORTH, TEXAS

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NO. 9

WATER FACILITIES PROGRAM UNDERWAY

Three Projects Set Up in Texas

Three water facilities projects were established this month in the drainage basins of four West Texas streams. Plans for project operations call for the construction of small water facilities such as stock ponds, farm water storage reservoirs, wells, water spreaders and garden irrigation systems on farms in 15 counties.

The three projects, approved shortly before October 15 by the Water Facilities Board in Washington, for development in the western portion of Soil Conservation Service Region 4 are:

California Creek Watershed. Water facilities construction work will be done on farms in the 700,000-acre watershed lying in the northern half of Jones County, the southern half of Haskell County and portions of Fisher and Throckmorton Counties.

Champion Creek and Lone Wolf Draw Watersheds, a 200,000-acre drainage basin in Mitchell and Nolan Counties.

Mustang and Seminole Draws Watershed, a 4,000,000-acre drainage basin lying in Midland, Martin, Andrews and Gaines Counties and parts of Howard, Glasscock, Ector, Yoakum and Dawson Counties. Technicians of the Soil Conservation Service in the Region 4 sector of Texas, which includes all territory outside the High Plains, will work in Midland, Martin, Howard, Glasscock and Ector Counties. Region 6 of the Service, with headquarters at Amarillo, will direct water facilities work in Andrews, Gaines, Yoakum and Dawson Counties.

"The need for conservation and utilization of rainfall in the arid and semi-arid areas of the West has long been recognized and various agencies have attacked the problem in their own ways," Louis P. Merrill, regional conservator, said. "But not until the passage of the Water Facilities Act of 1937 did a comprehensive program to aid the farmer and rancher through small water developments on his own land come into being.

"Now with an appropriation of \$500,000 from Congress and an allotment of \$5,000,000 by the Farm Security Administration for rehabilitation of needy farmers in 17 Western states, including Texas, through the provision of water facilities, the initial drive is being launched to promote a better use of land by means of small water development," Mr. Merrill explained.

The water facilities program for West Texas is a cooperative enterprise being carried on jointly by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Farm Security Administration and the Soil Conservation Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The Texas Planning Board, the State Board of Water Engineers and the Texas Extension Service assisted the federal agencies in selecting locations for the water facilities projects.

General responsibility and leadership for the operations phase of the program, especially in receiving applications and in constructing and installing water facilities, has been assigned to the Soil Conservation Service. Assisted by the Farm Security Administration, the Soil Conservation Service is to take the initiative in preparing individual farm plans and in determining the contribution of labor, equipment and materials which the farmer shall make toward construction of facilities on his farm. In the field, the Soil Conservation Service makes the contacts for the program with the general public and supervises arrangements with state and local agencies in the operations program.

The Farm Security Administration is to have charge of the financing of farmers, including the approval of loans for facilities work and the drafting of repayment schedules. It also will help the Soil Conservation in making farm plans and will help the farmer put these plans into effect.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics is charged with the responsibility for over-all planning of water facilities programs in specified agricultural areas.

Mr. Merrill pointed out that the plan for each farm approved for a water facilities loan will include, in addition to installation of water facilities, provisions for a complete and coordinated program of soil and water conservation and a farm and home program all designed to promote a profitable and stable agricultural enterprise.

"Funds are not to be expended for the provision of water facilities on a 'hit or miss' plan, or for a great variety of purposes," Mr. Merrill stated. "They are to be expended to provide carefully planned water facilities to achieve wiser land use over a period of years, and

through wiser use of land to promote the welfare of the people who live on the land."

Operations in the three project areas will be directed from small field offices now being set up at Stamford, Colorado and Midland. Region 6 of the Service will set up a field office at Lamesa, from which point its activities in the Mustang and Seminole Draws project will be directed.

Applications for work in the three project areas may be made to the field offices at Midland, Colorado and Stamford, and to any county agent or field representative of the Farm Security Administration.

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GRASS, TREES, VINES AND SHRUBS IN EROSION CONTROL

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By

C. B. Webster, Regional Nurseryman

More than seven million trees, vines and shrubs will be planted on cooperating farms in Region 4 during the fall and winter months to control erosion. These plants will be used to stabilize badly eroded areas through the establishment of new farm woodlands, to aid in gully control work and to establish protected habitats for wildlife.

It is estimated that 180,000 pounds of native tree and shrub seed and 80,000 pounds of clean grass seed will be needed by camps and projects throughout the region during the coming year for erosion control planting.

At the present time personnel of the Sibley, Louisiana, nursery are busily engaged in getting fall and winter planting stock, trees, vines and shrubs ready for distribution to camps and projects. Four million plants will be distributed from Sibley; additional planting stock will be supplied by the cooperating nursery of the Arkansas Forestry Commission and by Soil Conservation Service nurseries in Oklahoma.

Seed collection will be a major activity at Service nurseries and cooperating CCC camps during the remainder of the year. Processing and storage of seed will also be a major activity. The collected seed must be cleaned, cured, and stored or planted. White oak acorns, for instance, must be planted immediately to prevent damage by worms, rot or premature sprouting. Some seed can be stored in sacks or cans in dry buildings after being cleaned; some must be put in cold storage.

Coupled with the production and distribution of seed for use in erosion control planting is the observational studies of various grass and tree species at the nurseries to determine the plants best fitted for use in erosion control programs in various sections of the Region.

Areas at the nurseries devoted to native grasses and legumes which show great promise as erosion control plants must be expanded during the coming year so that seed production can be increased to permit additional observation in various problem areas of the region where these plants will undergo rigorous tests to prove their value in erosion control.

Among the grasses, Rhodes grass, an introduced variety, and Indian grass, a native variety, show exceptional promise as erosion control plants. Seed multiplication work at the nurseries will be designed to bring out definite information regarding the best time to plant and planting methods. Studies also will be made to determine the effectiveness of mixing certain species to bring about more effective land cover for erosion control.

The work of the seed laboratory at the San Antonio nursery will also be an important part of the winter schedule. Samples of all seed purchased for erosion control planting in Region 4 will be tested at the laboratory. The "lab" also will analyze all grass seed which has been collected, both at the nursery and by CCC enrollees in camp areas, to determine correct amounts of seed to be planted in various areas for erosion control and to prevent the introduction of noxious weeds, seeds of which may be mixed with the grass seed.

Close attention to the collection, growing and distribution of planting stock and seed is necessary to insure the planting of stock which will do the most effective job of controlling erosion. Coupled with erosion control, the Service desires to introduce varieties of grass and trees that will produce the greatest possible economic return to the farmer who uses them. Grass for erosion control, for instance, should be a type that can be utilized successfully by livestock. Trees for erosion control also should be considered in the light of their economic value to agriculture.

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HIGHWAY EROSION CONTROL

Six cooperative highway erosion control demonstrations along state and federal roads have been completed under the direction of engineers from the Texas and Arkansas Highway Departments and personnel from the Soil Conservation Service, a report from the regional engineer's office shows. Two other projects, one in Texas and one in Louisiana are nearing completion.

The completed projects: Arkansas: Russellville, Highway 64
Forrest City, Highway 1

Texas: Bogota, Highway 271
Sherman, Highway 75
Madisonville, Highway 190
Jacksonville, Highway 79

Projects under construction: Texas: Nacogdoches, Highway 21
Louisiana: Minden, Highway 80

DETAILED SURVEY OF THE CONCHO
RIVER WATERSHED STARTED

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A detailed flood control survey of the Concho River watershed area embracing 12 West Texas counties was started this month by personnel from the Soil Conservation Service, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

The detailed survey of the Concho is the second to be authorized for Texas, the first being the Trinity watershed survey on which work was started last summer.

Field offices of the Department of Agriculture, division of flood control surveys, have been set up at San Angelo from which point the survey work will be directed. George M. Morris, former project manager for the Soil Conservation Service at Nacogdoches has been selected as party leader for the Concho survey operations.

Surveys in drainage basins of Texas streams are being conducted by authority of the Omnibus Flood Control Act passed by Congress in June 1936 and amended in 1937 and 1938. The act provides that federal investigations and improvements of rivers and other waterways for flood control and allied purposes shall be under the direction of the Secretary of War and the supervision of Army Engineers, and that federal investigations of watersheds and measures for run-off and waterflow retardation and soil erosion prevention on watersheds shall be under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture, and shall be directed by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Under the provisions of this bill, the Department of Agriculture has set up 23 field coordinating committees to represent the Department in the investigation of watersheds that embrace most of the continental United States.

Louis P. Merrill, regional conservator for the Soil Conservation Service, is chairman of the field coordinating committee which serves a large part of Texas and areas in Louisiana and Arkansas. Serving with him on the committee are Glenn Briggs, Little Rock, Arkansas, regional director of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and E. L. Demmon, New Orleans, Louisiana, U. S. Forest Service. Mr. Demmon is director of the Southern Forest Experiment Station.

E. B. Decter, head of the watershed surveys section of the regional office of the Soil Conservation Service; Dr. Lewis M. Turner of the U. S. Forest Service, and T. J. Cauley of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, as representatives of their respective bureaus, will supervise survey work in the Concho watershed.

Survey operations in the Concho River area will cover the 5,700-square-mile watershed lying in Tom Green, Glasscock, Howard, Sterling, Coke, Reagan, Irion, Runnels, Concho, Upton, Crockett and Schleicher Counties.

"The flood control work of the Department of Agriculture as authorized by the Omnibus Flood Control Act is divided into three phases," Mr. Merrill explained. "The first being a preliminary examination to bring together all available information needed to determine for each watershed the seriousness of the flood problem, the interest of the people of the watershed in flood control, and to determine if the problem is serious enough to warrant further study. The second step is the detailed survey to delineate serious flood and silt source areas, determine the kind and amount of treatment required to prevent soil losses and to reduce run-off, estimating costs and determining whether or not the benefits to be expected will justify the cost. The information obtained by these surveys is submitted to Congress for its guidance in making appropriations for control work. If an appropriation is made by Congress, the third step will be the actual application of flood control measures on agricultural lands in critical areas," he said.

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SOIL CONSERVATION MOTION PICTURES

By James T. Mitchell, Jr.
Regional Photographer

An increase during the past several months in the number of requests for motion pictures depicting soil and water conservation work indicates that this method of disseminating information is proving helpful to the field personnel. Familiarity with the procedure required to secure motion pictures will expedite delivery and facilitate action on requests from the field.

USDA Miscellaneous Publication No. 288 lists the available subjects and includes instructions regarding procurement. For use in connection with soil conservation informational work the following subjects will be most appropriate: "Muddy Waters," "Grasslands," "Rain on the Plains," "Forest Fires - or Game?", "A-B-C of Forestry," "Stop Forest Fires," "Forests and Men," and "The Life of Plants."

Soil Conservation Service field offices may secure these films on a loan basis by a letter of request. Most of these subjects are in the regional film library and, if available, may be obtained. The regional office, however, has only one projector and cannot furnish film and an operator for all occasions.

Requests for film for use by CCC camps should be directed through the Army Corps Area having supervision over the camp seeking pictures. Requests for film for CCC camps should not come through the Soil Conservation Service regional office. Most of the camps in the region have all necessary equipment for showing movies and can secure films on soil and water conservation and other agricultural topics through Army officials.

All other individuals or groups interested in obtaining motion pictures on soil and water conservation and allied subjects may secure them by writing to the Bureau of Motion Pictures, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. The only charge is payment of shipping charges both ways.

When requesting motion pictures it is important to state whether 35 millimeter (standard width) or 16 m.m. (narrow width) is desired and whether sound or silent film is needed. Sound film cannot be used in a projector made for silent film. The regional office projector handles sound film and, for that reason, all available movie prints are sound.

As a general rule only two reels of 16 m.m. may be mailed under the four-pound frank limit. When ordering three or more subjects make out a bill of lading, allowing two pounds weight per reel.

Requests from field offices of the Service should give a definite date for the loan, name subjects in order of preference. They should be made two or three weeks in advance of the showing and must be routed through the regional office.

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PROGRESS OF DISTRICT WORK IN ARKANSAS LISTED

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Soil and water conservation practices are now being established on 695 farms embracing more than 88,376 acres located in the ten state soil conservation districts of Arkansas, a report listing work accomplished as of October 10, shows.

By October 3, more than 2,477 farmers in the districts had filed applications with their respective boards of district supervisors requesting assistance in establishing complete and coordinated erosion control programs on their land.

In addition to the 695 farms already under agreement, 165 other farms in the districts comprising a land area of 22,059 acres have been planned for conservation operations with the assistance of technicians of the Soil Conservation Service.

Soil scientists of the Service have completed conservation surveys on 840,541 acres of land in the districts.

During the month of September more than 600 farmers who operate land within the 10 districts attended 23 educational meetings.

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EXCERPTS FROM TALKS DELIVERED
AT ANNUAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE

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Parts of talks delivered by speakers at the general sessions of the annual conference of technical employees of the Service held in Fort Worth, October 3, 4, 5, and 6, follow:

Cy Evans, Dallas, Farm Security Administration: "Many clients of the FSA, formerly considered incapable of being rehabilitated, are now on the road to success with their farming enterprises because a program of soil and water conservation has made it possible for them to increase or maintain the productivity of the land.

"Every farm should be devoted to the type of agricultural enterprise the land is best suited for. Rural rehabilitation of the low income farmer must include a sound farm management program which calls for the proper use of the land and profitable employment of every member of the farm family the year round - not just for the duration of one cropping season."

T. Roy Reid, Little Rock, Farm Security Administration: "The low income farmer cannot be advanced along the road to agricultural stability by loans alone - he must farm his land in accordance with sound land use principles. The use of modern soil and water conservation practices will help to develop more permanent individual farming enterprises thereby insuring permanent life for the community. The physical condition of the land is inseparably related to the welfare of the people who work it since their economic condition is regulated by the productive ability of the land. Improvement of the land by modern farming practices must necessarily bring an improvement in the economic status of the farmer.

"The FSA in cooperation with other government agencies can help to rehabilitate the low income farmer by assisting him in acquiring land of his own but the farmer himself must learn to farm his land in accordance with sound land use principles if he expects to make a permanent business of farming."

J. Phil Campbell, Washington, D. C., in charge of cooperative relations for the Soil Conservation Service: "With 60 per cent of the nation's erosion damage centered on farms of 12 southern states comprising the cotton belt, the need for wide-spread establishment of soil and water conservation systems on farms of the South is imperative.

"Through soil conservation districts farmers can formulate plans which will insure the adoption of erosion control practices on farms in entire watersheds or other agricultural problem areas. The initiative for erosion control must come from the farmers themselves."

J. W. Sargent, Fort Worth, associate regional conservator:
 "The problem of controlling erosion may be solved if farmers regard the task as a community-wide undertaking and cooperate with each other under the system of state soil conservation districts. Soil Conservation districts place the responsibility for conservation of soil and soil resources squarely on the shoulders of local people who can draft their own plans of action to bring about effective erosion control throughout the district."

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DISTRICT WORK IS PROGRESSING RAPIDLY IN LOUISIANA

As of October 1, the Louisiana State Soil Conservation Committee had received 26 different petitions from groups of farmers seeking the establishment of soil conservation districts, Dean J. G. Lee, Louisiana State University, who is chairman of the state committee, has reported.

Nearly 9,000,000 acres of land are owned, operated or controlled by the signers of the 26 petitions. Approximately 2,000 individuals signed the petitions.

On the first of this month, hearings had been completed in two of the 12 proposed districts and only one hearing remained to complete the series of hearings in a third proposed district. In all, eight hearings had been held. Referenda had been called in two districts so that the farmers could decide, by vote, if they favored establishment of the district. Preliminary hearings, however, indicated that the majority of farmers favored district establishment.

The state committee has tentatively set up 12 proposed districts for the state, all to be established on a strict watershed basis when farmers vote in favor of such action. Petitions from several groups within a watershed are being consolidated so that a watershed district can be provided.

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NATIONAL PROGRESS IN DISTRICTS WORK

As of September 15, certificates of organization had been issued for the creation of 88 soil conservation districts in 24 states. Supervisors had been elected in 84 of the 88 districts. Land area of the 88 districts totals 43,858,403 acres. Twenty-six states have enacted districts laws.

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HUBAM CLOVER, A VALUABLE LEGUME

Hubam Clover (*Melilotus alba annua*) is proving to be a very valuable crop for erosion control and soil building purposes in the Blackland section of Texas.

Hubam is an annual white sweet clover that produces seed each year and attains a height of from three to five feet. It produces 250 to 1000 pounds of seed per acre, averaging about 400 pounds, and from one to two tons of hay per acre.

Farmers cooperating with the SCS in the Duck Creek Soil Conservation project at Garland, Texas, are very enthusiastic over the results being secured from the use of Hubam in the control of erosion and soil improvement.

Rufus Rupard, Garland farmer, says: "The cotton planted on land that was in Hubam in 1937 produced approximately 15% more than where cotton followed cotton. The bolls were larger and more numerous, and the cotton had a greener color."

C. B. Richardson, farmer, says: "I harvested 300 pounds of clean seed and one and one-half tons of hay per acre from my Hubam. The hay is higher in protein than alfalfa, and is taking the place of both hay and grain as a feed for my calves."

Walter Cooper, Garland farmer, says: "I planted Hubam and oats together and made a good yield of oats. After the oats were harvested I harvested nearly 400 pounds of clover seed per acre. One important advantage that Hubam clover has over the other legumes is that it will produce a hay and seed crop before damage from root rot becomes serious."

Hubam should be planted in the early spring in north Texas, and during the fall in the southern portion. Fall plantings are very apt to be killed due to cold in the northern part of the state. The seed should be planted on a firm smooth seed bed, using from 15 to 20 pounds per acre when drilled, and six pounds per acre when planted in three-foot rows. The seed should be inoculated with a reliable brand of inoculant, and planted from one-half to one inch deep.

The crop is ready to cut for hay usually in May or June, just as the first blooms appear. It should be harvested for seed when about two-thirds of the seed have turned brown, usually in July or August. The seed can be harvested with a binder and threshed with a combine or thresher. To hull or reclean seed, it can be run through a hammer mill at a moderate rate of speed. There is a possibility that Hubam is adapted to parts of Region 4 other than the Blackland. Plantings in the West Cross Timber have proved very satisfactory. Hubam clover does have a definite part in an erosion control and soil improvement program and should be used where adapted.

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SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CONSERVATOR
REGION 4

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